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THE MIDDLESEX FELLS.

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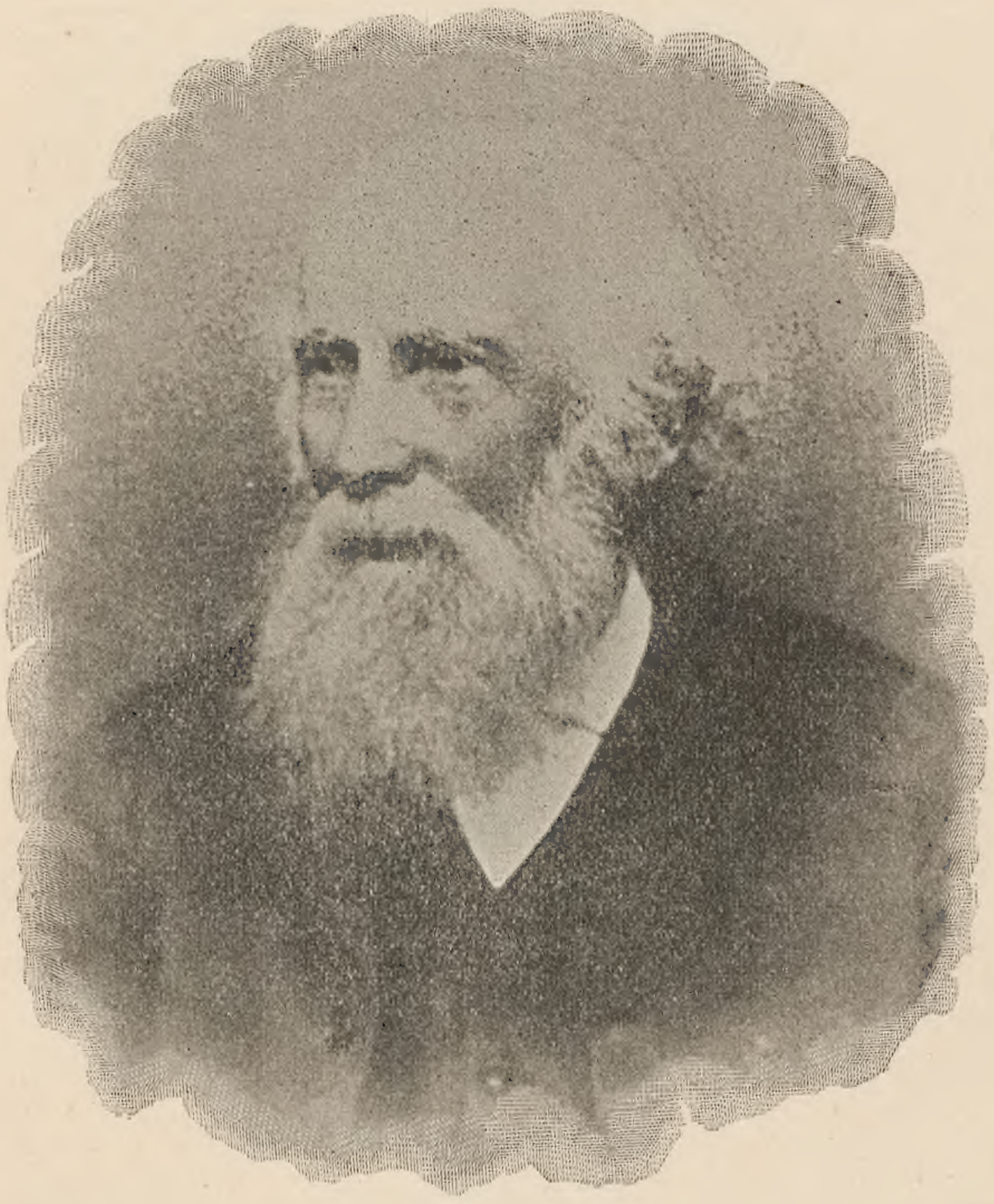

Respectfully Yours
Elisur Wright.

Most sincerely yours
Sylvester Baxter

Apr 8, 1925

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
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Gift of Sylvester Baxter

A LECTURE

ON THE

MIDDLESEX FELLS.

Prepared for the express purpose of aiding the movement for the preservation of the FELLS, illustrated with one hundred stereopticon views, and delivered before the Mystic Camera Club Medford, in Medford Town Hall, before the Appalachian Club in Boston, in Stoneham, Winchester, Melrose, before the Melrose Highland Club, and in Boston before the St. Botolph Club.

Published in response to numerous requests.

GEORGE E. DAVENPORT,
Medford, Mass.

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1893.

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Middlesex Fells

The favor bestowed upon this lecture whenever it was delivered, and the frequently expressed desire for its publication has led me to have it printed in its present form.

There now seems to be no longer a doubt of the preservation of at least the greater part of the Fells. The passage of the Act of June 1893, Chapter 407, and the appointment of Metropolitan Park Commissioners favorable to the project renders this almost certain. It is, however, much to be regretted that the Act should have been so amended in the Senate as to prevent the wild territory south of the great Turkey Swamp reservior from being taken by right of eminent domain, although it may still be possible to secure it by purchase, if not by gift.

Now the greater part of that territory, if not the whole of it; is so essentially a part of the great Fells that it will be a most deplorable mistake, if indeed it be not a crime against posterity, not to have it included in the reservation.

MEDFORD DOES NOT NEED IT, SHE HAS AMPLE TERRITORY, SUFFICIENT FOR ALL POSSIELE GROWTH, WITHOUT IT, AND CAN SPARE IT JUST AS WELL AS NOT FOR SHE WOULD STILL HAVE REMAINING A LARGER AREA OF AVAILABLE BUILDING LAND THAN MALDEN NOW HAS.

Every foot of territory north of the old Bower, running eastward to Pine Hill, and westward to the Winchester Heights, embracing within its limits Meeting-house brook ravine with its elevations and depressions, should go into the reservation.

Nature herself has here fixed the boundary lines and they cannot be changed without doing violence to her foresight. If now after all these years of earnest endeavor to secure this magnificent reservation for the pleasure and happiness of future generations, so much of Medford's portion of it is to be left out it will be an everlasting shame without any possible compensation.

My thanks are due to Mr. Rosewell B. Lawrence, for the use of his excellent map of the Fells.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

During the past two winter seasons, the Mystic Camera Club has shown upon the screen, a series of interesting views from distant and widely separated localities, illustrating many phases of natural scenery.

This evening we propose showing to you some views nearer home, and while we cannot expect to show scenes of such imposing grandeur and sublimity as are found in the mountainous regions of New Hampshire, California, North Carolina and the Yellowstone, we do hope that we will be able to demonstrate the existance of loveliness enough, immediately surrounding us here, to furnish material for an evening's entertainment.

A young friend who passed several years abroad in the pursuit of his artistic studies. recently told me that nowhere had he seen more charming landscape views, than could be found in and around Medford; but, he added, "I did not so fully appreciate this fact before I went away."

So it is. We are apt to look upon our immediate surroundings as commonplace, and seek elsewhere for that which may exist near at hand if we would only learn to use our senses in the right way.

The traveler who goes abroad for pleasure or study, finds everywhere marvelous creations in nature appealing to his senses, but he returns from a contemplation of them all to find that after all, "there is no place like home."

Absence, and the educating influences of the scenes through which he has passed, have broadened and enriched his mind, quickened his perceptions of the beautiful in nature, taught him how to discover beauty where before he may have thought none existed, and led him to find a restful satisfaction and enjoyment in the charms which make his native place "The dearest spot on earth."

Nature is everywhere beautiful. Why should she not be? The touch of the Divine Master is over and upon all her places, however grand or humble. The blending of His colors have no uncertain value but harmonious relations always. The surpassing loveliness of His valleys and streams, with their exquisite tones of light and shade; the delicious atmosphere pervading His tropical landscapes; the luxurience of His impressive forests; the magnificence of His marvelous seas; the grandeur of His mountain forms, and, above all, the splendor of His glorious skies appeal to the devout mind and soul with a force which culminates in an enduring and reverent love tor the Supreme Spirit pervading all.

"The men whom Nature's works can charm,
With God himself hold converse; grow familiar
Day by day with his conceptions; act upon his plan,
And form to his the relish of their souls."

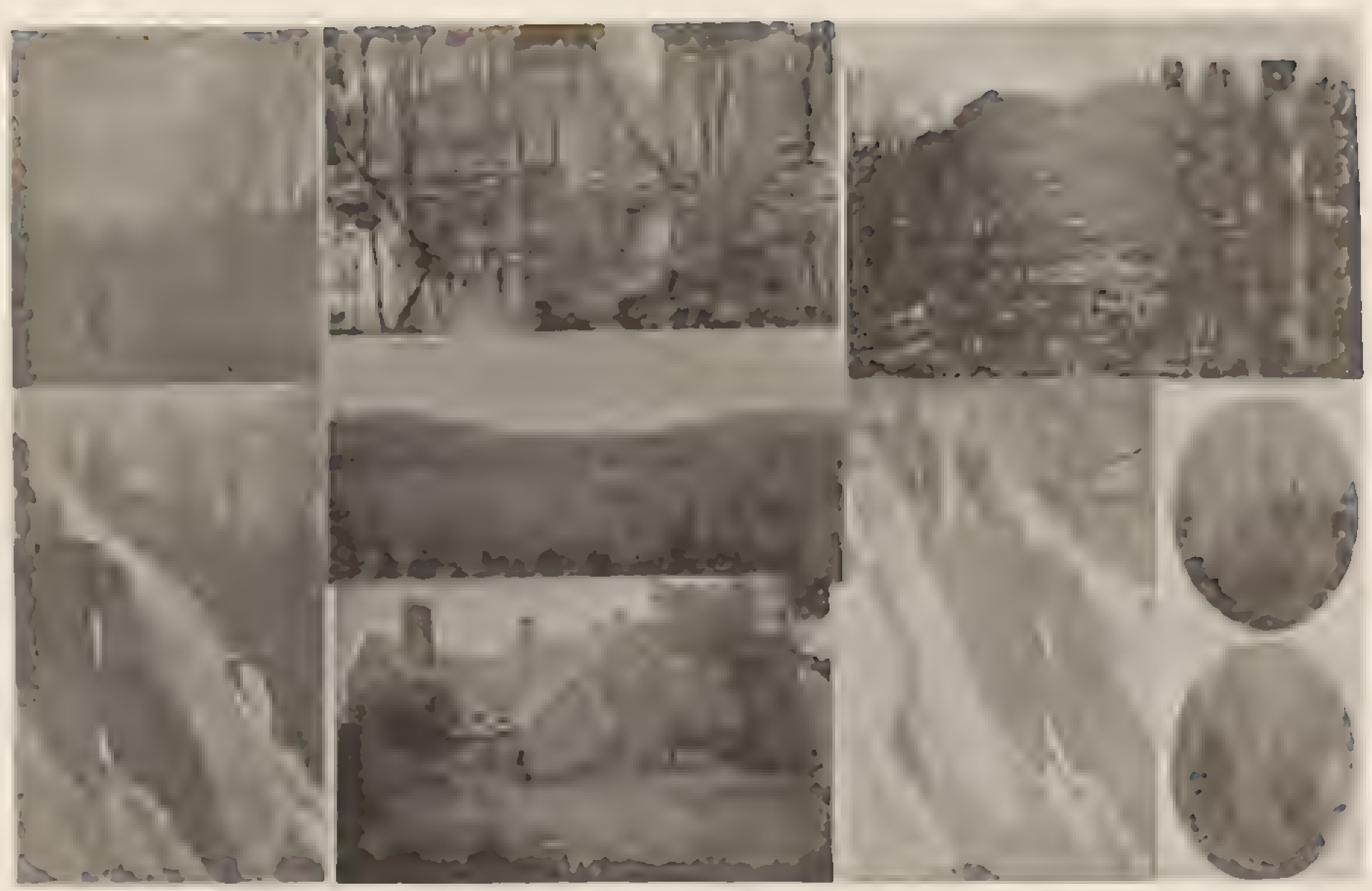
It is doubtful if anywhere else can be found in such close proximity to a great city, a more attractive region than that which surrounds the city of Boston, stretching in the form of a crescent from the Blue Hills of Quincy and Milton, to the hills and woods of Saugus and Lynn. The extreme points of this territory reach out on either side to Nantasket and Nahant, with an opening seaward through which the white sails go out to the great ocean beyond.

In the basin-like enclosure, between the hills and the water, sits the Queen City, with her bays and tributaries, and outlying annexes, resplendent in her beauty and glorious in her deeds and fame.

The great basin-like depression back of the city, which gives so sharply defined an outline to the hilly country beyond, is believed to be the result of volcanic action, and this belief is strengthened by the fact that evidences of a submerged forest have been found underneath the marshes at Revere, a fact which goes far towards explaining the presence in that wonderful natural botanic garden, Oak Island, of plants known to grow only in higher regions further away from the sea.

In the central portion of the outlying belt of hilly country, lies the special tract of wild uncultivated land, now known as the Middlesex Fells.

This tract of country has long attracted lovers of natural scenery, on account of its wildness and wonderfully picturesque love-



Woodland Park
Cascade.

Woodland Swamp
Cascade Hills.
Old Lynde House.

Black Rock
Cascade Views.

liness. Way back in the early fifties the "Boston Traveller" published an interesting article on the Cascade, and the drive through Wyoming, and around Spot Pond, with a glowing description of its beauties, and declared that if it were a hundred miles or more away, it would become the "Mecca" of summer resorts.

In 1856, that charming writer on rural subjects, Wilson Flagg' published an article in Hovey's Magazine, entitled, "A Forest Preserve, a Proposition to State and City Governments," in which he advocated the setting apart of the wild region extending from Stoneham to Salem, for the purpose of one or more "preserves."

In 1869, Elizur Wright published a pamphlet in which he urged the setting apart of "The Five Mile Wood," by which name the Fells was then known, as a public park, under the name of "Mt. Andrew Park," with a system of "Schools for the study of Natural History."

Again, in 1872, Wilson Flagg renewed his suggestions, and In those delightful essays on the "Woods and Byways of New England'" urged anew the selection of "The Five Mile Wood" for a "Forest Conservatory."

Then came some unsuccessful efforts to secure favorable legislative action, followed by a long period of discouragement until, in 1879, Sylvester Baxter, of Malden, published in the "Boston Herald," an article on "Spot Pond and its vicinity," which attracted wide spread attention, and revived once more the waning interest in the movement to secure that region for the purpose of a public park.

In this article Mr. Baxter brought forward for the first time in this country, the old Saxon word, "Fells," which had long been in use in England to designate just such wild hilly country as that he was describing, and suggested its application to the territory he so vividly portrayed.

The appropriateness of the name was so apparent, that it was at once accepted, and at the first regular meeting of the Middlesex Institute, of which Mr. Baxter was a member, held thereafter, it was formerly voted that all of that portion of the Middlesex Hills surrounding Spot Pond, and lying within the limits of Malden, Melrose, Stoneham, Winchester and Medford, be called ,, The Middlesex Fells."

Thus was consummated Mr. Baxter's happy thought, and the good old Saxon word, "Fells," transplanted from old to New England soil to take root deep down in the grand hills of Middlesex.

The outcome of all this, was the organization of the "Fells Association" with Elizur Wright for president and Wilson Flagg for secretary, with the avowed purpose of securing the preservation of the "Fells" for a great natural park, or forest conservatory.

Steps were at once taken to accurately define the boundaries of the Fells, by the publication of a map, and every possible effort made to arouse a public sentiment in favor of the movement.

The growing interest in Forestry, the peculair fitness of the Fells, for one of a series of state conservatories, devoted to the cultivation and preservation of forest trees, and the vigorous protests everywhere being made against the wholesale and wanton destruction of woodlands, going on in various parts of the country, combined to make the time seem an auspicious one, and encouraged the friends of the movement to look for a successful consummation of their efforts in its behalf.

I will not take up your time with the details of succeeding events. The untiring energy and boundless enthusiasm with which Elizur Wright gave himself up to this great work is well known, and I need not dwell upon it here.

The more retiring and sensitive nature of Wilson Flagg, shrank from too close a contact with public action, and the active work devolved upon Elizur Wright, who continued to brave every discouragement long after the death of his gifted compeer had left him to struggle on almost alone, but hopeful to the last. One day he called to invite me to attend a meeting of some friends of the Fells' movement, and when next I heard from him he had gone to "Join the innumerable caravan, that moves to the pale realms of shade," and struck his "White tent for the morning march, upward and onward to the eternal hills."

Associated with Elizur Wright at this time, was the veteran naturalist, John Owen, who did good service in behalf of a movement which deserved only success.

With the death of Elizur Wright the gradual dissolution of the Fells Association followed, and the movement for the preserva-

tion of the Fells relapsed once more into an almost hopeless condition of abandonment.

Happily, however, a fortunate combination of circumstances has since brought about the permanent preservation of a large part of the territory described by Mr. Baxter, through the inexorable force of the very necessity long foreseen and pointed out, and which has compelled Medford, Malden, and Melrose to take possession of the territory around Spot Pond, in order to protect its water shed, and keep its supply of water pure.

Besides this, Medford, to her honor, has purchased for the same purpose, and set apart for permanent preservation the entire territory, situated between Forest street, Elm street, Woodland road and Spot Pond.

Stoneham, has, also, to her credit, secured and set apart for preservation Bear Hill, and much of the territory surrounding it, so that, with some reservations also made, nearly one half of the Fells' territory as defined by the Fells Association, has been secured for preservation.

If now, it should come about, as seems not unlikely, that in the carrying out of the comprehensive plans of the Trustees of Public Reservations, and the Park Commissioners; the entire Fells should be secured and set apart, as a distinct park by itself, or as one of a great chain or series of parks, surrounding greater Boston, then it would be a most fitting thing to commemorate in some way the pioneer workers and perpetuate their memories by the dedication of suitable portions to bear their names.

All honor to them. Theirs is no uncertain immortality. They live in all the woodland scence they loved so well. Their spirits haunt the hills, the forests and the streams. Every leaf and rock, and flower, voices their praise. Æolian airs breathe for them loving benedictions, and just so long as the human soul responds to the influences of woodland scenery, so long will their names be wreathed with Memory's immortelles.

The total area of the Fells comprises some 4,000 acres of diversified land, which has been literally described by a local town orator as consisting of "one third swamp and two thirds rock."

Such a description, however, although almost literally accurate, would fail to convey to many minds anything like an adequate conception of the real character of this interesting and singularly attractive region, its wonderfully picturesque loveliness, and the

innumerable charms which constantly beset one on every hand in passing through it, tempting the tireless feet hither and thither through an ever changing succession of delightful scenes, until hours seem as moments, and the rambler wanders on heedless of time, now climbing some rugged hill to gaze afar on the expansive landscape, now basking in the quiet enjoyment of some pleasant nook, or following out the devious windings of some charming flower strewn wood path, that lures him on, and ever on through swamp, and dell, and scented ways, until lost to every reminder of the great busy world without, as completely as if hundreds of miles afar off in the most impenetrable wilderness of Maine.

And, so while rock and swamp are pleasureless words to some, not understood, to those who are akin with Nature, and have studied her luminous pages with understanding they convey a wealth of meaning that leads to rich mines of enjoyment.

For here we have a succession of well clad rocky hills, rising and falling like the billows of a great sea, within whose hollow troughs lie hidden pleasant vales, ponds, cascades, ferny brooks, sylvan retreats, wild swamps and fragrant groves.

In the early colonial time, the whole region was covered with a dense forest inhabited by wild beasts. Wolfs, bears and wildcats were the terror of the early settlers, who had more real reason to fear them than they had the Indians who were never troublesome when treated justly.

The geological formation of the Fells is peculiar and interesting. The rocks are almost entirely composed of feldsparporphyry and sienitic granite, with occasional seams of quartz.

The soil on the hills, is for the most part, thin but rich from long accumulations of vegetable mould and sustains an extensively varied flora. In the intervales it is deeper, often rich and strong, sustaining trees of great size.

One rambling carelessly through the Fells, will frequently come across evidences to show that many of the early settlers took up their abodes well in among the hills, cultivating the upland pastures and intervales.

Old orchards, ruins of old cellars; clumps of old familiar garden flowers lingering lovingly around old mossy crumbling walls, and other tokens of places once occupied, now deserted, are to be met with.

Panoramic views of Spot Pond with surrounding views, including Stiles's Monument, Pickerell Rock, the Cascade and Highland Avenue.

Such, in brief outline is the general history and character of the Middlesex Fells, a great tract of wild land, unfit for the general purposes of cultivation, but pre-eminently fitted for a great natural park, for which purpose it ought to be set apart forever.

But come with me now and let me take you through what I think is the most attractive portion of the Fells, and show you some bits of its scenery.

Here is our train well on its way over the Mystic river, with fair skies overhead and the promise of a pleasant day. From our car window we catch a glimpse of a scene that reminds us of Medford's former glory, when her ships were world-wide famous.

The river is a fine one, and the view up through the valley is beautiful.

Wonderful skies, and glorious sunsets are seen from time to time over the distant hills blending with the horizon.

We are on the main track of the Boston & Maine. Through the Wellington farms, Edgeworth, and Malden, past Oak Grove, and here is the Fells Station where we get off.

We continue our way on foot to the road passing the new Rubber Works, where we pause a moment to look about us.

Westward rise two noble elevations, the twin sentinels, which guard, Athos and Porthos like, the entrance to the Fells.

You can see even now how defiantly they bear their rugged breasts against the sky, as if they would hurl back the barbaric hordes of civilization, who have over-run the valley below, and threaten to invade even their sacred domain.

Long may they stand, impregnable alike to the assaults of time and every foe.

The view on the screen was taken before the "barbarians" had over-run the valley with their so-called improvements.

There was no Fells station then, nor Rubber Works, nor modern houses; only the old Lynde farm, stretching through the valley from end to end.

In the foreground is the old Lynde meadow, at that time intersected with running streams bordered with Nature's shrubbery, and, in their season, great masses of goldenrods and starry asters. Here, too, was the fringed gentian, flower of Heaven, and in the meadow east of the railroad, shy Parnassia half concealed his loveliness in the blades of grass. What splendid clumps of the purple sarracenia, with the wonderful pitchers half filled with the

intoxicating fluid which lured the captive insects to their doom, grew in the swamps below, where fair Arethusa displayed her peerless charms, and a host of floral treasures rewarded the botanist who searched for them.

Midway between the Twin Sentinels, are the Cascade rocks, over which the descending streams from the hills fall in a series of beautiful cascades; and beyond lies the great wilderness towards which we are wending our way.

As we reach the road which winds by the hills, we halt between two inclinations, that of ascending Black Rock, as the southern elevation is called, and that of visiting the cascades.

How hard it is to resist the first inclination. Who has not noticed with what eagerness the majority of almost any number of persons visiting the neighborhood of a high eminence for the first time, hasten to gain the highest point on its summit before exploring the woods around its base.

I have known those who would rush by the most charming things, trampling under foot the loveliest flowers and ferns in their haste to accomplish such a purpose.

To what else can this feeling be referred than to the intuitive heavenward aspirations of the human soul. Mark how the Thrasher seeks the highest branches of tall trees when pouring forth his morning and evening devotions; if perchance, he alights on some lower branch and begins his song, how uneasy at once he becomes, as if under the restraining influence of some power that prevents him from giving full utterance to his feelings. Thrashing his wings impatiently he rises higher and still higher, increasing the vehemence of his out-pourings with increasing altitude, until the highest spray is reached, when with wide distended throat and quivering frame he pours forth all his soul in exultation and joy.

So it is with the human soul; overshadowed by the depressing influences of daily life, its aspirations become fettered and kept down; but when on some day of relaxation. we go out into the grand temples of Nature, and stand in the presence of her sacred altars, the divine sense of freedom comes over us and our buoyant spirits turn our feet into wings as we ascend with our soul's offerings to the Great Creator.

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good;
Almighty. Thine this universal frame,
Thus wondrous fair—Thyself how wondrous then
Unspeakable, who sittest above these heavens,
To us invisible, or dimly seen,
In these thy lowest works; yet these declare
Thy goodness beyond thought and power divine."

Happily here we may combine both of our inclinations in one, and ascend Black Rock by way of thc Cascades. Our path winds along the base of Black Rock and through Pierrepoints Grove, the old camping ground of the Spiritualists.

Remembering this, as we get well into the woods, a weird influence comes over us. We feel the presence of other forms than our own. The realistic spirit of the age has sought in vain to banish from the woodlands all the old mythology with its rural deities, and they seem to rise up and surround us as we invade their domain.

As we go on higher up and come under the shadows of the great ledges, another influence comes over us, inspiring feelings of awe, and deeper thoughts.

Here was formerly one of Nature's flower gardens, and might be again if the Fells could be preserved and Nature encouraged to re-assert herself.

It was here that I first saw the blue-eyed hepatica and felt something of the rapture which filled the soul of the great Linnæus, when, on beholding this beautiful flower for the first time, he fell on his knees and thanked God for so much loveliness.

There were flowers and ferns, ferns and flowers in abundance on every side. The learned naturalist who thought that the brake and the sweet fern were the only two ferns in the known world, might have gathered here twenty species within the radius of a stone's throw.

But now the melody of falling water salutes us and as we turn a bend in our path, we come into full view of the Cascades.

The principal fall here has a perpendicular descent of about thirty feet. Above this fall the ledge over which it is precipitated recedes several feet forming a broad flat flooring from which rises a succession of rocky steps down which the water from above comes bounding at times with great force and beauty.

Above these steps there is a long rise to another series of smaller falls, the extreme altitude of which is 200 feet, aneroid measurement.

The Cascades are only seen to advantage during the early spring and late autumn months, or during mild intevals in winter, when melting snow and heavy rains have filled all the ponds and streams among the hills to over-flowing.

They are sometimes indescribably beautiful, and never more so than during mild seasons in March, when the combined action of sun and frost makes weird pictures of wonderful loveliness, breaking their icy shields into grotto-like openings through which the imprisoned water is seen reflecting back all the hues of the rainbow, and the over-hanging sheets of ice, fringed with the gleaming icicles, forming tasselIted curtains etched with the exquisite tracery of frost work and crystalized vegetation.

But one must visit the Cascades early in spring to witness such effects. Later on, as the snow disappears from the woodlands, other attractions allure the lover of Nature. The cheery notes of the blithe song-sparrow heralding the coming in of the vernal season, and the jovial call of the blue bird greet us. The buds are unfolding and preparing to open out to the April breezes the delicate blossoms and leaves that have been hidden away so long. Great masses of snowy saxifrage replace the snows of winter, and in the crevices of the rocks the columbines are getting ready to bring forth their splendid great gold and crimson chalices filled with nectar to welcome the coming of charming May.

From the top of the Cascade rocks, we have a fine view of Black Rock toward which we are now hastening. What lovely mosses are here; what luxuriant lichens all about us on rock and tree, as we go on and up the path, or push our way through thick brush, or climb rock after rock, until we reach the highest point where we rest and feast our eyes on the surrounding landscape.

Below us lies the pleasant valley, and gazing northward we can see the beautiful town of Melrose, beyond which the valley stretches away, until lost among the disiant hills.

On the opposite side of the valley is Boston Rock, and Prcspect Hill, with the Pine Banks between, and the beautiful Pratt woods stretching away in the distance, with the light playing over and among the hills and pines, with wonderful effects. Here are studies in light and shade to make an artist envious of Nature and despair of his art.

Doleful Pond.
Ravine Road—Old Turkey Swamp—Highlands from Bellum Rock—Bellevue Cascade—Ravine Road at 188
"The Cairn."

Cascade Brook.
Spot Pond.

Winchester North Reservoir.
The Old Red Mill.

Eastward are seen the hills of Everett, Chelsea and Revere, Washington Mount and Powder Horn Hill, Nahant, Egg Rock, and a belt of blue ocean dotted with white sails that "go down to the sea" disappearing in the far horizon that melts into the sky.

Along the southern course of the valley, the eye wanders over the tall spires and chimneys of Malden to the Mystic, beyond which is Bunker Hill and Boston with its gold dome gleaming sunlike in the distance.

Nearer, and almost at our feet, is Glen Rock, with the observatories, and between us and Glen Rock are many wild places, abrupt ledges, ravines, groves, swamps and streams.

Turning westward, now how great is the transformation. In place of the spires and domes erected by the hand of man over the marts and homes of busy communities, a vast wilderness lies out-spread before us as far as the eye can reach.

We seem now to be standing as it were, in the presence of two civilizations, and as our present outlook begins to impress us with a sense of the magnitude of the Fells, our minds revert to the time when the entire region was known only to the red man, who held divided sway with the wild beasts that roamed through its dense forests.

We are overlooking the Malden Highlands, the most characteristic portion of the Fells, and the one to which, more than to any other, the name Fells is particularly applicable. Here are the highest elevations, with the single exception of Bear Hill to the north, and the most rugged. Over-looking this section from the top of any of these elevations, it presents the appearance, so aptly described by Mr. Baxter, of a "great sea of stone with waves eternally motionless."

It is hard to realize that such a wilderness could exist in such close proximity to a great city; but being here, the wonder is that Boston has not long since secured it for one of her outlying series of parks, or that Malden, in whose lap it lies, has not been wise enough to secure it for the permanent use of her own people as a great natural park.

Lord Macauley, when describing the grandeur of the Highlands of Scotland, In one of his brilliant essays, expresses the opinion that the measure of ones enjoyment of such scenes depended on the measure of safety with which one might be able to view

them. Happily for us, we may wander through the Fells without any apprehensions for our personal safety, and abandon ourselves to the fullest enjoyment of the many attractive scenes which Nature here will unfold to us. The wild beasts that formerly invested the woodlands, are no longer here. The fierce Pequots, and the warlike Tarratines have gone, and we may penetrate the deepest recesses of the wildest sections without fear of savage beasts or savage men.

Let us then enter into this wilderness, yea, into its very heart, where the Great Architect has reared His solemn temple, whose foundation stone is the solid centre of the earth, whose pillared aisles are the eternal hills and vales, whose spires are the lofty pines, whose choral anthems are the chanting winds, and the joyous out-pourings of animated Nature, and whose incense is the wafted perfume of the floral hosts.

> "Shake from thy feet the dust of peopled way,
> Ere thou wouldst tread these corridors. Forget
> Thy worldier lot, and lift thy soul in praise,"

Over the hill and downward, and almost in an instant we are shut out from all sight and sound of the great busy world. How sweet is the morning air. How redolent with the aroma of the fresh inflorescence. How melodious with the varied songs of the birds. The very ground on which we tread, is resonant with music and our footsteps resound with earth's melodious pulsations as we pass along. Our path is lined and all the hollows filled with white birches, poplars and oaks, with willows and pines here and there intermingled.

As we follow the path onward and upward to higher ground, we pass a long range of steep cliffs, and the observatory hills from whose summits we obtain fine views of the teeming valleys of the Mystic and the Blue Hills of Milton.

Beyond Observatory Hills, our path slopes downward through a rough pass between high ledges, and a short distance from the path, on the west side of the ledge to our right is Bear Den.

One very naturally expects to hear some thrilling bear story associated with this den, supposed to have been at some time an abiding place for illustrating bruin, but the only story that has come to me, is one relating to a man who crawled inside of the den and made a fire, the warmth from which brought out from the crevices a few harmless snakes, which his terror magnified

into huge serpents causing him to beat a hasty retreat. His subsequent account of his escape may be better imagined than described.

The ledge of which Bear Den forms a part, is one of the most extensive exposed to view in the Highlands. Its northern extremity has been christened "Boojum Rock." The story is that on approaching this elevation, it suddenly disappears from view, and then as suddenly re-appears, without any apparent reason for so strange an action; but this is, of course, purely imaginary, and dependent on the particular point of view from which one approaches it. From the top of Boojum Rock, one gets the most characteristic Fells views of any in the Highlands. In the southwest is seen Highland Rock, a noble elevation of 300 feet altitude, which overlooks the country in all directions.

It is situated in the fork of the two western branches of Bear Den path, and may readily be reached by way of Highland avenue which runs directly by its base. But alas for Highland Rock. Since this paper was first written the sledge of the builder has rent its grand visage into hideous scars that admonish us of the fate destined to over-come these noble highlands, unless their preservation is hastened by the Park Commissioners.

One of the most interesting features of the Fells, is the frequent occurrence of huge boulders perched on high hills, or resting in the vales, where they were apparently deposited by the great ice sea which swept over New England ages ago, and where they now remain mute witnesses of the glacial period when the tremendous forces of Nature were wrestling for supremacy over land and sea.

One of these enormous boulders, many tons in weight, rests on top of an elevation west of Boojum Rock, and is known as "Druidical," or the Druid's Rock. Just why so called I have never been able to learn, but it is one of the most picturesque of all the boulders in the Fells, and the character of its surroundings might well provoke the suggestion of its name.

Lying there late one afternoon, resting, after a long tramp, a dreamful doze came over me, and all at once the fagots piled near the rock seemed to flame up into a blazing pyre, around which weird forms glided in mystical circles, muttering all the while incoherent invocations. As I gazed upon this strange scene, it seemed to change, and the cowled figures became trans-

formed into painted warriors who danced wildly around the glowing embers, brandishing their gleaming tomahawks and uttering fearful warhoops, that drove all the blood in my veins back upon my heart; but starting up, I beheld the after-glow of the sunset flooding all the skies and hills with its soft halo. That was my blazing pyre; the dark outlines of the evergreens standing out against the luminous sky, my druids; the flashes of light radiating from the crimson streaks along the lustrous horizon, my gleaming tomahawks and warriors red, and the thrilling war cries resolved themselves into the screams of the iron courser as he sped through the valley.

The hills in this section of the Fells, form a series of basins in whose hollows are many streams, pools and ponds. The most beautiful of these ponds is Hemlock Pond, with its fine grove of granite boulders at the upper end. Near by is a fine swamp of white birches, and a short distance to the north is Shiner Pond, where those astute historians, the boys, who are generally well initiated into all the mysteries of the woodlands, within any reasonable distance of their homes, say that they used to go fishing for the little fish called "shiners."

Eastward from Shiner Pond on the summit of a conspicuous elevation, is the conical collection of stones which is designated on the Fells map, as the "Stone Monument," but which the boy historians declare was built by the Malden High School boys, and by them called "The Cairn," certainly a much more appropriate name for it than the other.

The clear tones of some wheelman's bugle comes borne to us on the wind from over the hills, as we now descend once more and make our way eastward, now along charming woodpaths, through thicket and swamp, and now over spongy hummocks, or rugged hills, until we reach a long ravine that leads us out on to the road near the old Lynde house, one of the oldest houses now standing in Melrose, and one of the oldest in New England. Like the old Craddock House in Medford, it has outlived many generations and ~~make~~ many interesting periods in our early history. What thrilling stories of peace and war, of love and sorrow its old rafters could relate if they could only speak!

But we are now approaching a region where evergreens largely, and as we turn into Ravine Road, almost entirely predominate. Magnificent pines and hemlocks stretch their great branches

View near Pine Hill.

Landscape.

Old Hartford Spring

Three views of Turkey Swamp Reservoir.

Bear Den Path

White Birch Pool and Swamp.

across the road on either side, forming a delightfully cool and pleasant roadway; and yet so favorably exposed to the penetrating rays of the genial sunlight, that, on almost any bright sunny day in winter, when snow is on the ground, one can select bits here and there in which the loveliness of all seasons blend in one charming composition.

A few years ago Ravine Road was the grandest roadway anywhere in the vicinity of Boston. Nowhere could be found such noble pines and hemlocks. All the hillsides were covered with beautiful evergreen groves, through whose spreading branches the winds make music as sweet as the softest cadences of Æolian harps.

In the deep ravine beyond the hill south of the road, grew the grandest hemlocks in the state.

One gazed upon them with a feeling that they might be survivors of the "forest primeval," veritable titians, whose awe inspiring grandeur lifted ones soul heavenward in prayerful gratitude to the Supreme Power who alone can create such wonderful productions. But alas for those noble trees. The irreverent mammon-worshiping spirit which tears down the pillars of our sacred fanes, and seeks to quench the holy fires of our soul's altars, marked them for its own, and acres of unsightly stumps show the devastating pathway of this Atilla of our civilization.

Before this destruction began, I was fortunate in securing two photographs of Ravine Road at its junction with the Red Mill Road, one having been taken in the spring and the other in the winter time.

From Ravine Road there are several charming wood-paths strewn with wintergreen, partridge berries, ladies' slippers, anemones and star flowers, leading to the ravine, where in a deep gorge, is the old red mill, once the centre of a thriving colony, but now the mecca for amateur photographers.

Above the dam, over which the over-flowage from Spot Pond used to fall in a very lively cataract, the ravine comes down through the fine woodland, just donated to the "Trustees of Public Reservation," under the name of "The Virginia Wood," a name given by the donor in honor of his daughter. The preservation of this charming bit of woodland is something to rejoice over, and the Appalachian Mountain Club is entitled to our lasting gratitude for its generous contribution towards securing the sum necessary for its maintenance.

Following out the upward course of the ravine, we pass out of Virginia Wood on to Woodland Road, and turning to the right we continue on our way until we reach the north-easterly corner of Spot Pond, where we obtain a partial view of the pond and Pond street.

But as one of our party has already climbed the hill on the right, we follow him to the top, and from that point behold a scene which more than repays us for our long morning tramp.

Before us in all of its unsurpassed loveliness, lies the gem of eastern Massachusetts, the most picturesque of all her ponds, and, while we are resting on this hill, I will point out to you some of its most attractive features.

The large island near the centre is called Great Island. It contains about an acre of land nearly covered with a fine grove of evergreen and beech trees, and has always been a favorite resort for pleasure parties.

Some thirty-five years ago, there was a colony of old country people near the old Red Mill, who, in keeping up their old home custom, were in the habit of visiting Great Island to have wrestling matches, and among them was a famous wrestler by the name of Shute, whom no one had been able to throw; but one day when under the influence of too much "'alf and 'alf" he was overthrown and his companions subsequently erected over the spot a granite slab bearing the inscription, "Here Shute fell." When the ex-champion next visited the island, and saw this reminder of his disgrace, he lost his temper and hurrying away never afterwards visited the place; but the monument still remains, with the inscription badly defaced by time and has given rise to many legends and conjectures as to its meaning, some fanciful and amusing and some historical and probable.

Spot Pond is surrounded on all sides by charming woodlands, while the gracefully curving lines of its shores make a succession of lovely bays, every turn of which reveals a new combination of beauty.

I have been with those who were unable to discover any composition here fit for a picture, but I consoled myself with the reflection that there were some who if they were permitted to catch a glimpse of Heaven, would criticize it adversely and declare that it was not so very beautiful after all.

For myself, every rock and tree is a thing of beauty, full of

the revelation of Divine Power and goodness, and I have never yet visited Spot Pond without discovering some new and unexpected phase of loveliness to admire.

On its southern border is the old picnic grove with its picturesque bay and overhanging willows.

Near the centre of the southern shore is Pickerell Rock and bay, the loveliest bay of all, though sadly disfigured now by the ruthless destruction of the picturesque old tree which over-hung the water's edge, and the stunted old cedar on top of the projecting rock.

Pickerell Rock is the finest of all the Spot Pond boulders. It commands some fine views over the pond, and its surroundings, and has been the scene of many piscatorial triumphs; black bass, pickerel and perch rewarding the angler's skill.

From every point of view charming scenes surround this lovely lake pond, and an appreciative lover of Nature's beauties, finds constant delight in its ever-changing moods, whether of calm or storm, from the time when the tender greens first touch the young foliage until the splendors of autumn transforms the whole lake into a vision of loveliness more beautiful than a poet's dream.

In midsummer when the moon is near the full, wonderful effects are to be seen here at night, weird glimpses of the pond through the trees, or through the different openings along the road, and what could be more beautiful than to glide over the surface of this beautiful sheet of water in the witchery of a moonlight evening, when the lunar goddess is sublimely soaring through ethereal space and shedding her soft halo over the luminous water.

The temptation to linger here is strong but we must hasten on.

Descending the hill and continuing on our way along Pond street we pass in succession the ice houses, the old wind pump, the grand old willow on our left, and Doleful Pond, and then through South street until we reach the old Andover Turnpike, now Main street, Stoneham, nearly opposite Bear Hill.

Ascending Bear Hill, by way of the cart path, through the rocky meadow we are soon standing on the historic "Cheese Rock" where Gov. Winthrop and party rested and lunched over 260 years ago. How changed is the scene from what it must have been at that time. The "Goodly Plain" mentioned in his diary, is now covered by the thriving town of Stoneham, and the

good governor would not be able to recognize it in its present garb.

The unpoetical name which the hill bears originated with one of the early settlers, who had an unpleasant meeting with a bear on the hill when looking for his cow.

Bear Hill is the highest elevation in the Fells, registering with an aneroid barometer, in my possession at the time, 425 feet at two points, and commands the most extensive views.

Through the line of cedars on its western brow, a long range of mountains is seen in the far distance; Washuset and Monadnock being the most prominent.

Its southern declivity is the most rugged, and is well shaded with fine evergreens and great rocks well covered with lovely mosses and beautiful ferns.

On the south side the hill slopes gradually with a delightfully sunny exposure, and half way down there is a spring of the purest water around which there have been many memorable gatherings. From the top of the large rock on the summit, the eye ranges over the most extensive tract of woodlands in the Fells, a dense wilderness in a wild state of Nature stretching away to the Pine Hill in Medford, with the heights of Arlington in the distance.

This region is rich in attractions of every kind. Here are some of the wildest scenes, the grandest and most pleasing. Groves where Diana might have held her court; crystal streams for her fair nymphs to bathe in; hillsides for elfs to gamble over, and temples where the high priests of Nature hold their sacred worship, and where the soul of man rises into communion with his Creator.

Over and through this region, the lover of Nature may roam for days with ever increasing delight, while a worker in any branch of natural science will find here ample fields for investigation and study. So while those who resort to the Fells for the enjoyment ot their æsthetic tastes alone, find plenty of attractions to minister to their sense of the beautiful, the naturalist studying the various manifestations of Nature, as seen in her multiform productions, finds here allurements to repay him in a thousand ways unknown to others.

But it is now high noon, and emulating the illustrious example of our great predecessor, we spread our own lunch and prepare

Fulton Street, with views up the Ravine. The Willows. Hemlock Pond, and a roadside view near Elm Street.

to rest awhile before beginning our afternoon's tramp homeward.

Meanwhile, let me show to you some views illustrating the central section of Spot Pond, between Woodland Rock and Fulton street on the east, Forest street on the west, and Love Lane on the south. It is nearly equally divided by Elm street which connects Fulton and Forest streets near the old Copeland farm, and the Saville estate recently purchased by Medford.

It may be reached most readily by way of Fulton from Salem street, Medford, or by way of Forest street from Medford square.

The latter course would be best for any one going from Boston. Forest street is one of the finest surburban avenues around Boston. From Medford to Stoneham it passes almost directly through the heart of the Fells, dividing it into nearly equal sections on either side. As we approach Pine Hill, we get some charming views.

Leaving Forest street at a point nearly opposite Pine Hill, we wend our way through that most charming of all our rural lanes, Love Lane, and cross over on to Fulton street over which we pass through the heart of the central section which we are now describing.

After passing Green Mountain Grove, the old picnic resort, Fulton street becomes very picturesque in character, every turn in the winding road yielding charming road views with undulating landscapes of hill and meadow outspread on either side.

To the right of Fulton street an attractive region of rocky and wild swampy territory, extends through to Highland avenue, including within its limits some fine bold eminences commanding extensive views, and the old historic section known as "The Rocks," where we find the huge boulder which the children call "Molasses Rock."

On the left of Fulton street through the grove, is a fine ravine, which winds through many places to the Willows, where a very curious natural phenomena is to be seen in the joining together of three old willows by means of connecting branches at the base.

On the uplands here, are beautiful clumps of ferns, and some fine landscape scenery.

Crossing the ravine, in a northwesterly direction from below, we come out on to Elm street, and reaching the high land on the other side, we get a fine view of Medford's reservation; that portion of the Fells between Elm street and Spot Pond, with Wright's Pond in the foreground.

Not far from Wright's Pond, in a northerly direction, there is an immense boulder, which was considered by Elizur Wright to be the largest in the Fells.

From this point we may continue on to Spot Pond by way of the foot paths, or go out on to Forest street and return homeward past the old Toll House, or we may follow Forest street in a northerly direction, until we come to Bear Hill, where we have been resting.

In a hurried tramp through the Fells, like that which we are now making, it is impossible to do more than glance at its most characteristic features.

To become fully acquainted with and appreciate its innumerable attractions, one must make many and long visits, and of no section is this more true than of that through which we are now hurrying.

Descending Bear Hill on the south side, we make our way through the woods in a southwesterly direction, until we reach Taylor Mount, from the top of which we over-look the Winchester North Reservoir.

It is a peculiar characteristic of Fells scenery, that even when over-looking the same scenes from different elevations, the combinations and play of light and shade are so different, that one appears to be gazing upon entirely new scenes, and this is especially true of the views westward from Bear Hill and Taylor Mount. The first, is the grandest, the latter the most pleasing.

From the south side of Taylor Mount a deep gorge opens downward into the ravine and swamp, from which pleasant woodpaths lead out on to Forest street; but we prefer to make our way through the woodlands and foot paths to the great lake reservoirs that Winchester has created out of the old Turkey Swamp where we obtain some views of surpassing loveliness.

To one familiar with the character of Turkey Swamp, no longer ago than 1890, its transformation into the picturesque and beautiful lakes empowered among the hills and resting in the hollows of the landscape like jewels in Nature's regal diadem, is more marvelous than anything ever wrought by old Merlin's magic arts, or the witchery of Aladdin's lamp, and one is at a loss to know which feeling predominates in the mind, admiration for the energy and foresight displayed by Winchester in this provision for her future water supply, or surprise at the tremendous folly

of Medford in parting with her rights in the old Turkey Swamp, with its splendid possibilities.

So complete has been this conversion of a great swamp into a great lake, that a stranger viewing it for the first time, would find it hard to realize that it was not Nature's own production, but the handiwork of man; that wonderful versatile creature whose plastic hands mould the elements at will, and shape the resources of Nature to suit all the various purposes of his existence.

In the old days Turkey Swamp was a favorite nesting place for some of the rarest of our native birds, its deep recesses and almost impenetrable thickets affording them ample protection, and so, when I was making my way homeward along the borders of the new lake late one afternoon last spring and heard the plaintive notes of a lone warbler from the spray of an over-hanging bush near the water's edge, uttering its low evening song, it seemed to me to be the inexpressibly sad requim of a bereft spirit bewailing the loss of its old haunts, and I could not help wishing for the old swamp once more with all its old time attractions, when the songs of the birds were blithe and cheery.

During the summer of 1884, the bed of the old swamp contained an immense number of typhas, (cat-o-nine-tails), standing so close together, that as the wind stirred their ripened plumes in the noonday sun, the swamp looked like a vast sea of surging billows reflecting rays of burnished silver. Merely as a matter of speculation, I made an effort to approximate the probable number of seeds there, and estimated 528,000,000,000; but the photograph which I made of the swamp at that time will, in comparison with those of the reservoirs shown, give a very good idea of the character of the great change which the place has undergone.

Below the great dam with its magnificent green slope, Meeting House Brook, or as the boys at one time called it, on account of the great number of smelts that used to ascend from the river to spawn, Smelt Brook, runs through the valley clear to the Mystic river. When the springs are over-flowing, and the streams are running full and free, this is the most beautiful of all our brooks.

It flows through a delightfully diversified region, and, from early spring, when the golden cowslips are gleaming in the swamps, to late autumn, when a few belated goldenrods and

astors are lingering along its banks, its attractions are continually inviting the lover of Nature to seek its charmed retreats.

Near its outflow, into the meadow below, are some fine old willows, and not far from there is Marm Betts' Pond, Pasture Hill, and the noble grove of evergreens known as Hall's wood.

Between Hall's woods and the brook, is a fine old orchard, and the "Bower" where may still be seen the remains of the old earth dam and sluice way where years ago, the old mill stood.

A little further up the ravine, where the brook divides into two branches, is an interesting swamp and a confused mass of large boulders.

Still further up, we come to a basin-like depression where the views in either direction are especially charming.

From this point, as we follow the footpath along the top of the bank in a northerly direction, we come to the finest specimen of an oak tree in the Fells.

Brook's history of Medford mentions an oak near the Bower which was noticeable on account of its great size, but I have never been able to locate it satisfactorily, and my good friend Mr. Hervey thinks that it was cut down thirty or more years ago. It is to be hoped that this one will escape a like fate. I imagine it was some magnificent tree as this that inspired Elizur Wright's admirable little brochure, "The voice of a Tree."

A short distance from the great oak tree, another woodpath curves along the edge of the brook to the "Forks," where we find a party testing the truth of some of the smelt stories, which they have heard, and in the woods on the hillside to the right is a queer rock which from certain points of view resembles a huge frog perched on its haunches.

Some of the other special features of this section, are the Silver Mine, near which there is a spring of delicious water, Mt. Lincoln and the "Fire Place."

The latter is situated in a rocky pass to the northwest, between Brooks Lane and Forest street and is one of the most interesting features of this section of the Fells.

From this pass we make our way, regardless of path, through woodland and swamp, until we reach the ravine, which leads us round to the great ledges that reach out from Pine Hill range, and then into the Pine Hill woodlands, we go by way of Quarry Path, which passes between two long lines of prominent ledges in the direction of Pine Hill.

Pine Hill Landscape. Wright's Pond. The Fish Place. Pine Hill Woodlands. Yellow Birch Pool.
Forest Street near Bellevue. Love Lane. Wrights' Boulder. Pine Hill Meadow.

In the Fells there are no woodlands more dear to me than the Pine Hill woodlands, none more lovely or fuller of those attractions which lend a charm to the seclusion of Nature's byways, and fill the soul with restful satisfaction and enjoyment.

For more than 20 years they have been to me an unfailing source of delight, and many are the floral treasures that I have gathered in their wild swamps and ravines, where grew the purple orchids and glowing cardinals, splendid in their regal magnificence of scarlet glory.

Never have I visited these incomparable woodlands, without finding some new and unexpected phase of loveliness to repay me and I view with indescribable feelings of pain the great scars made by the excavations in their hillsides.

How often I have wished that I was wealthy enough to purchase the whole territory between Pine and Bear Hill, and dedicate it forever to the lovers of Nature.

But I rejoice to know that all the territory immediately surrounding the great Turkey Swamp Reservoir, has been secured for preservation by Winchester, and that nearly 50 acres of the best of Pine Hill woodlands and ledges are held in reserve by Walter and Ellen Wright, who, with the noble spirit of generosity inherited from their father, propose donating this reservation free whenever the Fells are converted into one great natural park, as there are many reasons now to hope will soon be the case.

Diverging from Quarry path, near the old Quarry, we make our way upward along the ferny cliffs until we reach the top of Pine Hill, where we overlook the entire region, through which we have made our afternoon's ramble.

Southward lies Medford, with Chelsea beyond, and in the distance the "wrinkled sea," while in the fore-ground is Bellevue, and the fine estate of Elizur Wright.

There is a lesson to be learned from the history of this noble elevation, (Pine Hill) that it will be well to heed. In early times it was covered with a dense forest growth. In 1775-76 the wood was cut off to supply the army. Twenty years later it was again covered with a thick wood, but in 1855 the whole hill was again stripped, and, said the historian Brooks, "much of its poetry lost," adding the quaint remark that "the earth looks best with its beard." At the present time it is again well covered with a fair growth.

Now, if this one hill left only to the wonderful recuperative powers of Nature, could undergo these changes within so short a time, what may not the whole range of hills be made to yield through the judicious management of a scientific forestry commission?

The question of forestry is becoming a serious one in all parts of the country. The vandals are at work everywhere subjecting our woodlands and forests to the most barbarous and atrocious treatment, and their reckless and indiscriminate work of destruction cannot be checked any too soon. The preservation of the Middlesex Fells therefore, may be made to serve not alone the purposes of a great natural park, but as a school of instruction in forest culture; while its reservation will guard and protect from pollution the water supply of the surrounding communities.

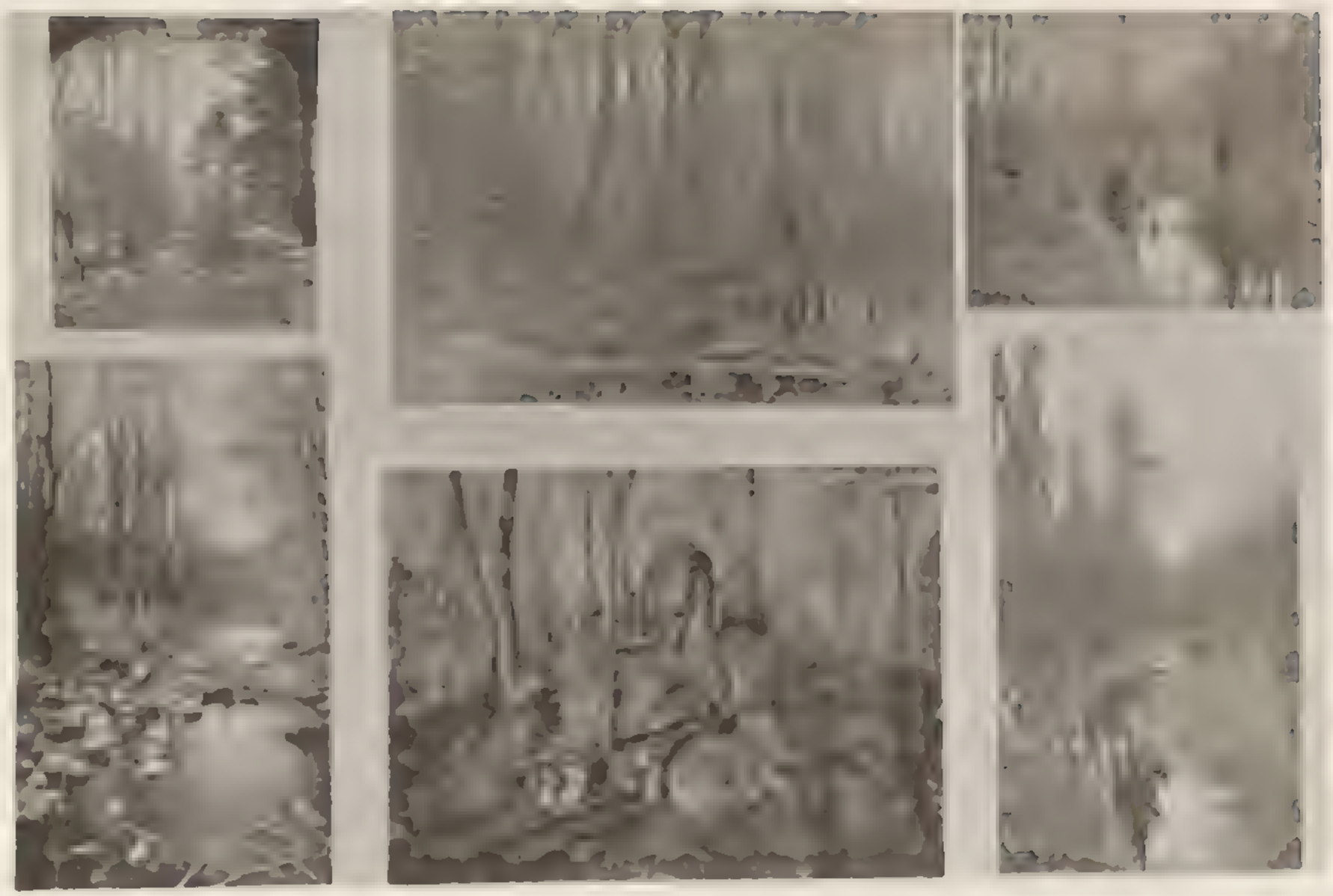
But there is still another, and a most weighty consideration involved in this question of preserving the Fells, one that should not be overlooked, and it is this:

The Middlesex Hills are full of the purest springs of water, and if they can be preserved and guarded in all of their integrity, it it will then be possible to sink numerous artesian wells from which the surrounding communities can be supplied in times of need, and which can be made a source of revenue for maintaining intact the whole reservation. Even those who are inclined to consider such questions from a purely utilitarian point of view, must acknowledge the force of this consideration, and a little reflection will show to them the further value and benefit of such a reservation to the surrounding communities, through the increased valuation of the border lands and the greater facilities for frequent and rapid transit necessary to accommodate the constantly increasing amount of public travel.

But the shadows deepen over the hills; a ruddy glow in the western horizon, toward which the sun is rapidly hastening, admonishes us that the day is drawing to a close, and that our excursion must come to an end.

Descending the hill by way of the footpath down its southern slope, we are soon on our way out of the Fells, though not without many lingering looks behind, and frequent loiterings by the way.

The skies soften, and grow more mellow with the approaching



Illustrations of Meeting House, Brook, Ravine, Showing the character of the exempted territory.

twilight, the evening songs of the birds grow sweeter and sweeter as one by one they die away into silence; the tremulous notes of the veery linger among the copses, and the sun sinks into rest behind the hills as we emerge from Bellevue and turn our footsteps toward home.

"Adieu, fair shades and thrilling silences,
Ye blossoming thickets vocal with sweet song.
Ye cloisters where aerial cadences
Shed lethe o'er the thought of earthly wrong.
Farewell; To human care and pain returning,
The memory of your loveliness shall rise,
Like a pure flame within thy bosom burning.
And bless the tears that fall from loneliest eyes.
I leave your stately, sculptured calm unbroken,
Yet when the shadow of despair shall fall
Upon my struggling spirit, as a token
Of love divine, your voices still shall call;
And every wandering wind that sweeps your lyres,
Find echo in the heart your song inspires."

Thomas Higginson

FINIS.